

STAFF REPORT

DATE: February 25, 2020
TO: City Council
FROM: Darren Pytel, Police Chief
SUBJECT: Safety Enhancement Zone for Picnic Day 2020

Recommendation

Approve the attached Resolution Establishing a Safety Enhancement Zone associated with Picnic Day 2020 (Attachment 1), which would increase penalties for certain Municipal Code violations committed during that celebratory period of time within the Safety Enhancement Zone.

Fiscal Impact

Although the City receives more revenue per citation for citations written in the Safety Enhancement Zone, the increase is negligible in the overall budget and is not a factor in establishing the Zone.

Existing signs from previous years will be used. Funding is included in existing budgets. Labor to create and install and then remove the signs will be diverted from other maintenance activities.

Council Goal

Although the Safety Enhancement Zone meets the criteria to ensure a safe, healthy, equitable community, it is part of regular business and is not a specific task outlined in the goals.

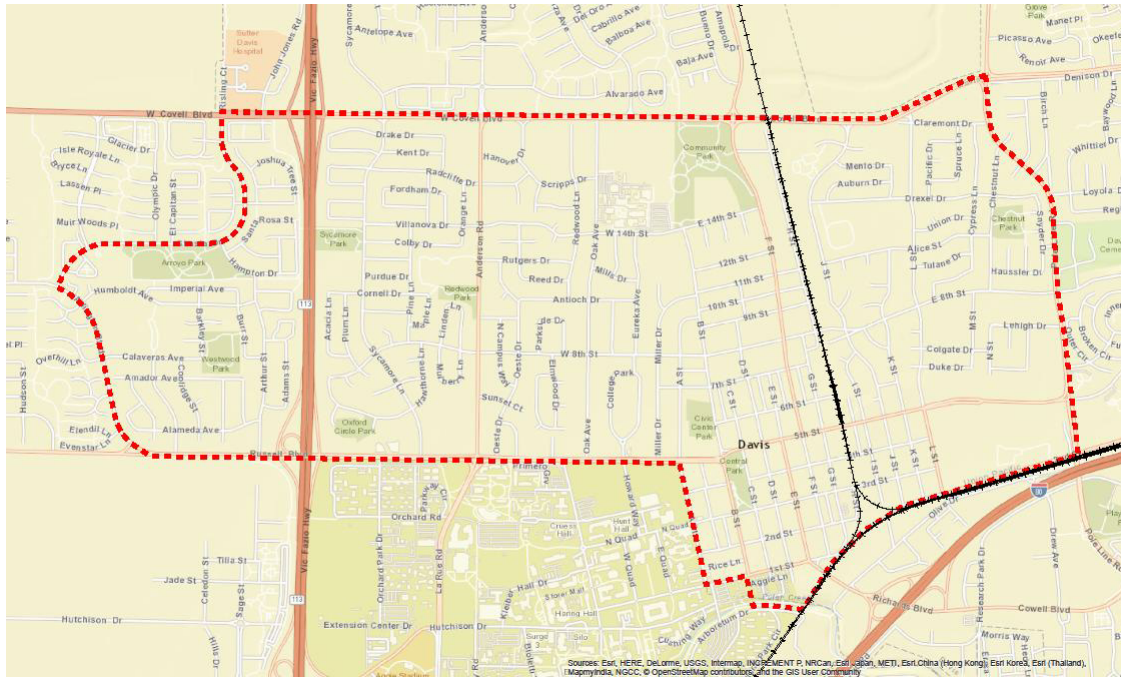
Background and Analysis

In 2011 Council added Chapter 41 to the City of Davis Municipal Code authorizing the City Council to designate Safety Enhancement Zones to enhance penalties for violations of certain Municipal Code provisions committed within a designated zone, during a prescribed period of time. Each time the Council wishes to utilize that portion of the code, it must adopt a resolution outlining the dates and locations in which the Zone will be enacted. Council must therefore adopt the attached resolution in order to establish the Safety Enhancement Zone (SEZ) for Picnic Day 2020.

The City Council has been briefed previously on many of the problems associated with Picnic Day, including large parties and dangerous behavior. The sole purpose of the entire weekend, for many of those who do not engage in the formal campus events, is to get intoxicated, without concern regarding behavior. That mentality, coupled with the sheer number of visitors to the community, has resulted in a difficult event (or series of events) to manage.

The SEZ was created as the result of discussions with community groups, UC Davis campus staff, the police department and the business community in 2010, with a goal to reduce problems associated with intoxication. The SEZ began in the downtown and was expanded to adjacent neighborhoods in subsequent years, most recently in 2017. Staff does not recommend any changes to the SEZ used in 2019. A map is included below.

Proposed Safety Enhancement Zone 2020



The goals for establishing the SEZ, which increases fines for certain offenses occurring in the zone, are to deter unlawful behavior, particularly within the SEZ (that area determined to be where the majority of public offenses and nuisance behaviors occur), and to punish more severely those who choose to violate the laws in the SEZ. Enactment of the ordinance does not add or modify existing laws or ordinances. The ordinance simply authorizes increased fines within the SEZ during the specified time period. Signs will be posted at major access points to the Zone, as well as locations within the SEZ, warning of the enhanced fines for specified offenses.

In establishing the SEZ, it is important to identify a specific target area where prior notice (street signs), public education, and later enforcement can effectively occur. The SEZ should be designated because there is a prior history of problems, which makes the designation of the SEZ defensible, if challenged. This area has been identified as having the most frequently violated/reported Municipal Code provisions contributing to Picnic Day disorder and violence, such as: possessing open containers of alcohol, general noise violations, urinating in public, and smoking within twenty feet of a business (normally, bars and/or restaurants). The SEZ area has seen significant calls for service, including several very large alcohol/drug-related parties with over 1,000 young adults in attendance, during the thirty-six hour operational period for Picnic Day (6:00pm Friday through 6:00am Sunday).

As it has in years past, the Safety Enhancement Zones ordinance would be widely publicized prior to the annual Picnic Day weekend. City staff will work with groups on campus to publicize the zone. Student groups/associations will be utilized to help educate the UC Davis student body of the consequences of Municipal Code violations.

Attachment

1. City Council Resolution Designating a Safety Enhancement Zone for Picnic Day 2020

RESOLUTION NO. 20-XXX, SERIES 2020

RESOLUTION DESIGNATING A SAFETY ENHANCEMENT ZONE FOR PICNIC DAY 2020 AND DESIGNATING THE TIME DURING WHICH CERTAIN MUNICIPAL CODE VIOLATIONS COMMITTED WITHIN THE DESIGNATED SAFETY ENHANCEMENT ZONE WILL RESULT IN INCREASED FINES

WHEREAS, pursuant to state law, the City Council may impose fines, penalties, and forfeitures for violations of local ordinances; and

WHEREAS, the City Council adopted a Safety Enhancement Zones Ordinance, Ordinance No. 2375 on February 15, 2011, which authorizes the City Council, upon making certain findings, to designate a safety enhancement zone to enhance the penalties for violations of certain provisions of the Davis Municipal Code committed within the designated zone during the time in which that zone designation applies; and

WHEREAS, Picnic Day attracts a large number of visitors to the City; and

WHEREAS, the City has in the past experienced public safety problems on Picnic Day, including problems associated with excessive consumption of alcohol; and

WHEREAS, the City anticipates the typical large crowds for Picnic Day 2020; and

WHEREAS, the City desires to take measures to protect the safety and welfare of the community on Picnic Day and of those who visit the City to enjoy Picnic Day festivities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Davis that public safety problems historically associated with annual Picnic Day celebrations have created a need to take action to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the community and visitors to the City on the upcoming Picnic Day; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a specific geographical area within the City is subject to unique conditions and circumstances on Picnic Day that create the potential for a significant threat to the public health and safety for residents and visitors to the City, as that area is where it has been determined that the majority of public offenses, nuisance behavior, and violence has occurred in past Picnic Days; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the potential threat to health, safety, and welfare would be reduced by enhanced penalties for violations of certain provisions of the Davis Municipal Code, including provisions regulating the possession of open containers and the consumption of alcoholic beverages in public, general noise, public urination, and public smoking, as the increased penalties are expected to deter illegal behavior, including illegal and/or excessive alcohol consumption and nuisance behavior; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Davis hereby establishes a safety enhancement zone, as outlined in Exhibit A, attached hereto, that shall be in effect from 6:00 p.m. on April 17, 2020 to 6:00 a.m. on April 19, 2020; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the boundaries of the safety enhancement zone shall be:

- The northern margin on the north side of W. Covell Blvd. and E. Covell Blvd., from the western margin of Shasta Dr., to the eastern margin of Pole Line Rd.;
- The eastern margin of Pole Line Rd., from the northern margin on the north side of E. Covell Blvd., to the southern margin of the Union Pacific rail-line/right-of-way;
- The southern margin of the Union Pacific rail-line/right-of-way, from the eastern margin of Pole Line Rd., to the western margin Union Pacific rail-line/right-of-way where it intersects with the City Limits of Davis;
- The intersect of the City Limits of Davis and the Union Pacific rail-line/right-of-way following the City Limits of Davis to the western margin of A St.;
- The western margin of A St., from the southern margin of the public sidewalk on the south side of First St., to the southern margin of Russell Blvd.;
- The southern margin of Russell Blvd., from the western margin of A St. to the eastern margin of Arlington Blvd;
- The eastern margin of Arlington Blvd., from the southern margin of Russell Blvd to the eastern margin of Shasta Dr.; and
- The eastern margin of Shasta Dr. from Arlington Blvd. to the northern margin of W.Covell Blvd.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council directs City staff to post signs at various access points to the designated safety enhancement zone, and throughout the designated area, warning of the enhanced fines for violations of the specified offenses.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Davis on this 25th day of February, 2020, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

Brett Lee
Mayor

ATTEST:

Zoe S. Mirabile, CMC
City Clerk

